



Chapter 7: Implementation Plan

Introduction

The recommendations and strategies in Chapters 5 and 6 provide a framework and direction for a future transportation system that is safe, efficient and better able to meet the demands of tomorrow while maintaining the current system. They acknowledge today’s fiscal, political and social realities while incrementally moving beyond the status quo to better integrate the disciplines of transportation planning and land use planning through regional collaboration.

Implementing the *Destination Tomorrow* Plan will require an increased level of regional coordination and collaboration by PACTS member communities and funding partners such as the MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority. In each community, the city or town council, planning board, planning and engineering staff, local businesses and residents will need to be active participants in this process.

The Implementation Plan is divided into two time periods – 2004 through 2009, and 2010 through 2025. The chapter focuses on the first six years when key Plan elements will begin to be implemented, and when the processes needed to realize the full Vision of the Plan will be collaboratively developed. The final part of the chapter looks at the TIP revision process that will occur in 2003.

The box to the right highlights key components of *Destination Tomorrow* to be undertaken in the first six years. Several of these components, as well as

Six Year Action Plan

1. Implement key plan strategies, including:
 - maintaining the existing highway, transit and freight transportation systems;
 - addressing critical intersections;
 - implementing appropriate access management practices; and
 - maintaining I-295 as the primary route for intra-regional traffic and the Maine Turnpike as the major route for traffic traveling through the region.
2. Work with the MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority to complete major projects including:
 - Gorham Village Bypass;
 - studies regarding a regional toll system;
 - corridor analyses for widening sections of the Maine Turnpike and I-295; and
 - passenger rail service from Portland to Brunswick.
3. Implement the arterial project/land use plan policy.
4. Secure additional funding through the Legislature and the Congressional Delegation to close the funding gap.
5. Revise the PACTS funding process to maximize limited available transportation funds and ensure that transportation investments achieve the goals of *Destination Tomorrow*.

many of the Plan's Guiding Policies and objectives overlap each other reflecting the close relationships that exist between transportation, land use and economic development. Key to the successful implementation of *Destination Tomorrow* will be a continued dialogue that includes the following persistent questions.

1. How best can communities collaboratively address regional transportation problems?
2. What is the proper level of investment and role of transit in the region for meeting the mobility needs of today and tomorrow, and for congestion reduction?
3. What is the optimum investment balance to mitigate existing problems while proactively meeting tomorrow's needs?
4. What is PACTS role in addressing transportation and land use issues, including sprawl?
5. What are the best short and long-term approaches to managing congestion without exacerbating sprawl?

Implementing Key Plan Policies

The funding gap between identified needs and total anticipated revenues discussed in Chapter 6 will limit the ability of decision-makers to address all of the identified needs in the transportation system. Working within these limitations, the following four areas will be a focus of the Plan during its first six years (2004-2009). PACTS members consider each of the areas to be crucial to the future of the transportation system. Figure 7-1 graphically highlights key components in the first six years of *Destination Tomorrow*.

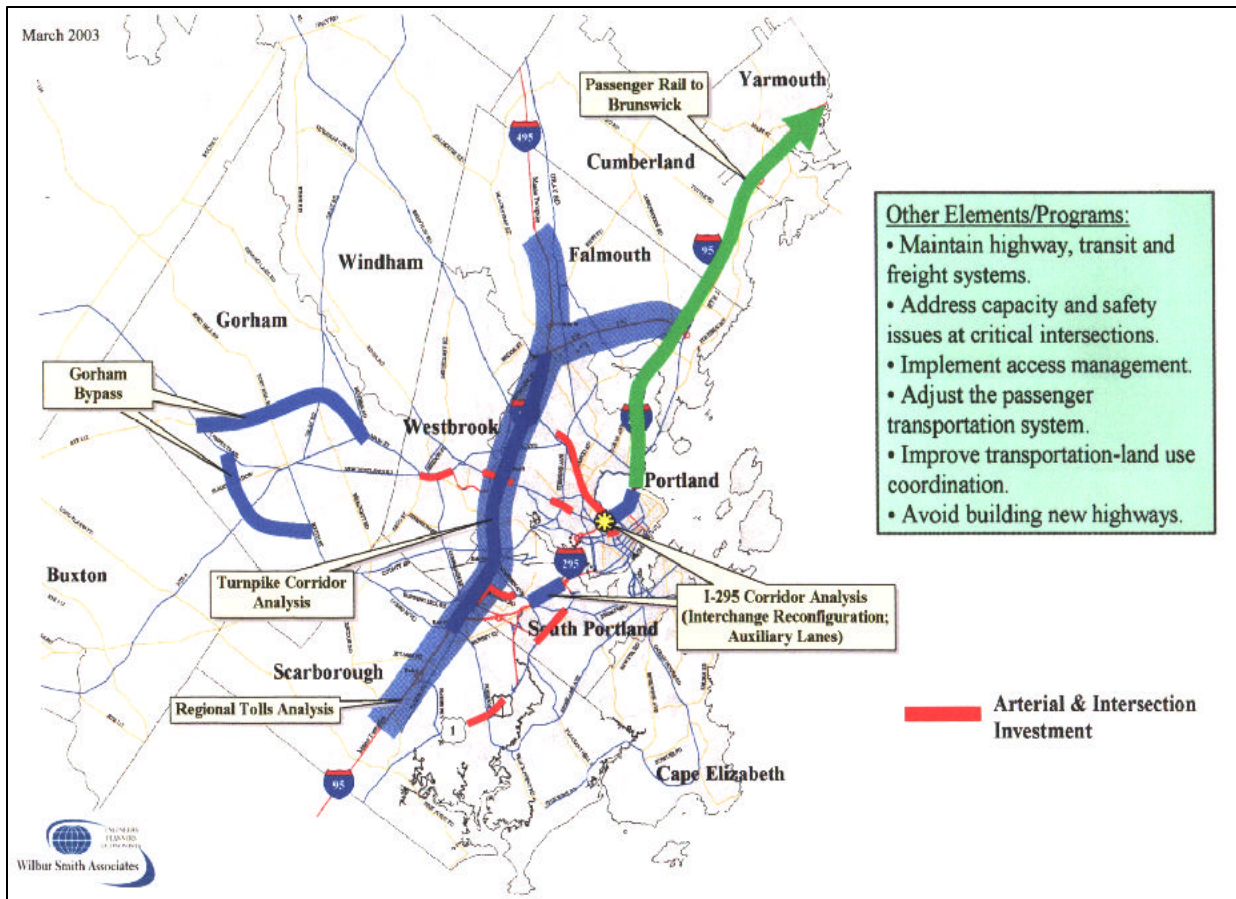
Maintain Existing Transportation System

The Capital Investment Framework calls for devoting \$120 million in the Plan's first six years to maintain the highway, bridge and public transportation systems. This figure exceeds the total level of anticipated funding and reflects the PACTS decision that preserving the existing system is its number one priority.

Addressing Critical Intersections

Intersections often act as bottlenecks to the smooth flow of traffic. Intersections are also a source of accidents. The Capital Investment Framework calls for allocating \$9 million to improving the region's critical intersections between 2004 and 2009.

Figure 7-1 Six-Year Action Plan



Arterial Project/Land Use Plan Policy

The most important *Destination Tomorrow* land-use-transportation recommendation may be the following policy adopted by the Policy Committee in February 2003:

Any arterial corridor roadway project, that by itself or as part of a program of improvements will reduce commuter travel times between an urbanized and a non-urbanized area, must be accompanied by a land use plan that preserves the arterial’s capacity, protects its mobility function and the public investment, and that minimizes sprawl.

During 2003 the PACTS Planning Committee, MaineDOT, the State Planning Office and others will draft procedures for the implementation of this policy. The first application of this policy may be in 2003 and/or 2004 regarding the impacts of the proposed Gorham Village Bypass. The policy will also be used during the continued study of the potential benefits of widening sections of the Turnpike and I-295.



Access Management Principles

As growth and development continue, maintaining access to land while simultaneously maintaining highway capacity becomes ever more challenging. The full range of access management measures represents an effective method to maintain the balance between these competing needs. Appropriate use of access management measures is also effective toward mitigating the need for other capacity-related, road improvement projects that are significantly more costly.

Roles of I-295 and Maine Turnpike

Destination Tomorrow contains several recommendations and strategies to enhance and reinforce the Turnpike as the preferred interstate for traffic traveling through the region and I-295 as the preferred interstate for intra-regional traffic. Benefits from this course of action could include: reducing the rate of traffic growth of city streets, reducing the rate of traffic growth on I-295 thereby delaying the need for any widenings of I-295, and maintaining safety conditions on both interstates.

Major Regional Projects

During the development of *Destination Tomorrow* several major regional projects were being studied, funded and designed. Each of these projects has received widespread support. The Plan also supports each of these projects, recognizing that they will bring significant benefits to the region.

1. Gorham Village Bypass

This critical project will relieve long-time, persistent congestion in Gorham Village. Phase I of the project will connect Route 114 to Route 25 via a bypass to the southwest of Gorham Village. Phase II will bypass Gorham Village to the northeast. As noted above, MaineDOT and FACTS will work with the Town of Gorham and adjacent municipalities during 2003 and/or 2004 to apply the Arterial Project/Land Use Policy in order to protect the public investment in the bypass (Phases I and II) and to minimize its secondary land use impacts.

2. Regional Toll System

Destination Tomorrow supports the creation of a regional toll system. Study and discussion of such a system have been underway for several years. Included in the discussion are the exact locations of the toll plaza, the amount of the toll, and actions that may be taken should municipalities be negatively impacted by the placement of the new toll plazas. Pending the support of the Legislature, the Maine Turnpike Authority and the municipalities adjacent to the toll plaza, creation of a new regional toll system would take from two to five years to complete. (It is expected that some Turnpike travelers will divert to other streets and highways in order to avoid paying the toll. The cost to widen impacted streets and intersections could exceed the

anticipated cost savings and other benefits of the proposed system. Analysis of this possibility is underway.)

3. Interstate 295 and Maine Turnpike Corridor Analyses

Destination Tomorrow recommends selected widening of sections of the Maine Turnpike and I-295 during the next twenty years. In 2003, the MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority, in consultation with the PACTS members, will begin further study of actions that could be taken to improve travel along these corridors. With projected improvements potentially totaling \$75 million over a twenty-year period, very extensive technical, environmental and social analysis and public discussion will be undertaken prior to commencing any substantial improvement project.

4. Passenger Rail Service from Portland to Brunswick

Destination Tomorrow supports the MaineDOT decision to extend passenger rail service to Brunswick by 2006. This will build upon the successful renewal of passenger service from Boston to Portland. Service may be further extended to Rockland in 2007. In addition to its statewide benefits, MaineDOT anticipates that the expansion of passenger rail service will remove some traffic from I-295, which will help to manage traffic growth on the interstate.

The Transportation Improvement Program

The PACTS Policies and Procedures Document for the Transportation Improvement Program details the process used by the PACTS Policy Committee every two years in prioritizing transportation projects to be funded with the MaineDOT "MPO Allocation". The TIP is composed of funding from a variety of sources; some that PACTS directly controls – largely the MaineDOT "MPO Allocation" of federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds; and others that it traditionally has had less input on. Upon formal MaineDOT acceptance, the list of projects is included in the MaineDOT Biennial Transportation Improvement Program (BTIP). The BTIP document contains the list of planned capital investments for a two-year period.

This process has worked well since the 1970s. However, with the development of the *Destination Tomorrow* Plan, PACTS members decided to thoroughly reexamine the process and make revisions where appropriate. The revision will be completed in 2003, and will establish a closer integration of the Plan's priorities with TIP policies.

In January 2003, the Policy Committee formed the TIP Process Committee to reexamine and revise the TIP process by December 2003. The Committee is composed of members from each of the three standing PACTS committees and representatives from the MaineDOT and the transit provider agencies. The overarching charge to the TIP Process Committee is to strengthen the

connection between *Destination Tomorrow*, FACTS study and funding recommendations and the TIP process.

The FACTS Planning and Policy Committees, a February workshop for all FACTS members and Wilbur Smith Associates (the Plan's lead consultant) have all provided potential topics for the TIP Process Committee to examine. These topics (outlined below) are broadly placed into three groups and are neither all-inclusive nor prioritized at this time.

Focused on Destination Tomorrow

1. Increase the regional focus of and approach to transportation planning.
2. Tighten the relationship between *Destination Tomorrow's* goals and the TIP funding process so that funded projects are consistent with the Plan and its goals.
3. Use varying local match requirements for transportation investments to actively promote the Plan's goals and emphasize the regional nature of the transportation system.
4. Require that project proposals for the TIP be consistent with *Destination Tomorrow*.

Funding Allocation Priorities

1. Establish the region's critical intersections and arterials as a funding priority.
2. Recommend eliminating the current cap on non-formula projects, or increasing it. (Non-formula projects are projects that cannot be rated using the Roadway Formula.)
3. Recommend the establishment of minimum allocation levels among three programming areas: system maintenance, community enhancement and new capacity.
4. Recommend the establishment of a minimum allocation level for arterial investment and redevelopment.
5. Integrate smart growth principles into the FACTS TIP priority setting process.

TIP Process

1. Recommend a degree of emphasis for the requirement and/or implementation of access management practices.
2. Fund the preliminary engineering of a project in one funding cycle, and fund the construction of the project in a subsequent cycle.
3. Establish a TIP Project Selection Review Committee whose major roles would include:
 - a. recommending a total TIP package of projects to the Policy Committee; and
 - b. determining the degree of consistency between *Destination Tomorrow* and individual projects and the total TIP package.
4. Review the current Roadway Formula criteria. Is the formula too heavily weighted toward traffic volume?
5. Does the administrative process, e.g., submittal, timing, budgeting, review, and decision process work well and yield acceptable and legitimate results?
6. Review the current policy regarding project overruns.



7. Expand the public participation process to more proactively seek additional public comment on planning studies and project recommendations throughout the process.

Closing Thoughts

Many of *Destination Tomorrow's* recommendations and strategies are targeted toward the first six years of the Plan, a timeframe for which a reasonable assessment of funding levels is possible and a tangible plan of action may be developed. *Destination Tomorrow* also includes many recommendations and strategies designed to achieve a safe, adequate and efficient transportation system out to the Year 2025. These recommendations and strategies for the latter stages of the Plan focus on setting the transportation framework and policy direction necessary to complete the achievement of the Plan's Vision.

The 2004 update of the Plan will reflect the 2002 PACTS expansion and the perspectives and transportation issues of its new members, and will build upon the foundation of *Destination Tomorrow* and broaden the Plan's regional approach. Subsequent updates to the Plan as required by the federal government every three years – will further build upon this foundation.

In the coming years, PACTS members, including the MaineDOT in particular, will continue to diligently work with regional and State decision-makers to ensure that the overarching goals of *Destination Tomorrow* are reached. The PACTS members firmly believe that the holistic approach recommended in *Destination Tomorrow* creates the foundation needed to provide a transportation system that meets the needs of tomorrow without sacrificing the region's character and quality of life, the health of the natural environment, and the potential for continued economic prosperity.